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SUBJECT: COUNCIL OF EUROPE: MORE EFFECTIVE AROUND THE EDGES THAN AT
ITS CORE

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CLASSIFIED BY: Vincent Carver, CG, Strasbourg, State. REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

1. (C) SUMMARY: The Council of Europe (COE) likes to portray itself as a bastion of democracy, a promoter of human rights, and the last best hope for Europe. (C) The current COE Secretary General, Terry Davis (UK), leaves office this summer, after a five-year term that has been, according to many, one of the best. (SBU) On the eve of Secretary General Davis' meetings in Washington, we outline some of the COE's "value added" while noting some of its serious flaws. (SBU) One of the COE's bodies with the widest reach is the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). The ECHR serves as the court of final appeal for many European countries. (C) While the COE can be effective in the various important tasks as noted above, on key geostrategic questions, it muddles through at best. (C) Two other illustrations of the COE's reach extending far beyond its influence is the omnipresent agenda item of "the situation in Cyprus." COE discussions on this issue amount to little more than an unending rehash of the same old arguments.

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17. C) Finally, we turn to one issue where the COE has been both an irritant and, more recently, somewhat of a champion - Guantanamo. Dick Mart